

**MEREL VERCAMMEN HIGHLIGHTS NADIA BOULANGER'S MENTORSHIP
WITH NEW ALBUM *THE BOULANGER LEGACY* FEATURING VIOLIN WORKS
BY BACEWICZ, PIAZZOLLA, AND BERNSTEIN**



Dutch violinist Merel Vercammen and Russian pianist Dina Ivanova release a new album of works for violin and piano by the Boulanger sisters, Bernstein, Bacewicz, and Piazzolla on 30 April 2021 on the immersive TRPTK label.

The album 'The Boulanger legacy' brings to light the versatility of legendary conductor, pianist and composer Nadia Boulanger in her role as a teacher and mentor through the lens of her pupils' compositions for violin, and with three pieces by her sister Lili Boulanger, whose work Nadia championed throughout her life.

The younger **Lili Boulanger** died prematurely at the age of 25, and she always remained the greatest promise after winning the Prix de Rome in 1913 for composition with her cantata *Faust et Hélène* dedicated to her older sister. She was the first female winner of the prestigious award in France, leading to a residency in Rome where she composed *Cortège*. *Nocturne*, opening piece of this album, is a beautiful violin melody in the impressionist style and contains quotations from Debussy *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* and Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*. Lili's music had many influences, as the Boulanger sisters grew up in a musical household where Charles Gounod and Gabriel Fauré were family friends. Lili left 30 compositions of which *D'un matin de printemps* (1917) is the very last work Lili completed.

Nadia Boulanger, who counted Stravinsky as one of her closest friends, has shaped the sound of 20th century classical music through the incredible number of students she taught. Her tuition practice, nicknamed as 'Boulangerie', saw many major musicians and composers travelling to Paris to visit 'Mademoiselle' and take composition lessons. Among them, featured in this album, are works by Grazyna Bacewicz, Leonard Bernstein, and Astor Piazzolla.

Merel Vercammen: *"It is extraordinary to see she has inspired so many young artists. What is most fascinating about Boulanger is that her many students are all very different from each other. She encouraged them to become the best version of themselves."*

Well-known in her home country, the Polish composer **Grazyna Bacewicz** is increasingly gaining international recognition today. A violinist herself, she took lessons with the Hungarian Carl Flesch and studied composition with Nadia Boulanger in the early 1930s at the Conservatoire de Paris. To honour her music for violin, Merel choose one of her five sonatas to feature on the album.

Astor Piazzolla looked for Nadia Boulanger's expertise in the mid-1950s and was encouraged to show his true 'tanguero' colours in his compositions. He took the advice to heart, fusing tango with jazz and classical music style elements, and developing the genre into a style of its own. For *Le Grand Tango* featuring on the album, Merel took lessons with bandoneonist Leo Vervelde to get the right feel for rhythm and timing.

Leonard Bernstein often relied on Nadia Boulanger's guidance and was one of the last people to speak to her before she died in 1979. The Violin Sonata included in the album, was written in 1939 in his adolescent years, prior to his encounters with 'Mademoiselle'. Later, Bernstein reused the melody of his only piece for violin, more specifically the fourth variation of the sonata for his second symphony *The Age of Anxiety*.

The final track of the album is a work by Nadia Boulanger herself, who stopped composing shortly after her sister Lili passed away to commit to teaching, conducting, and promoting Lili's music. Lacking a work for violin, Merel transcribed Nadia's *Three Pieces for Cello and Piano*.

This fresh programming is typical for Merel Vercammen's approach to discovering repertoire and developing her broad musical taste. The Dutch violinist is known for bringing improvisation into classical music performances. A Royal College of Music graduate, her "be true to yourself and invent adventure" attitude has so far resulted in two innovative recordings.

This third album is Vercammen's second recording together with pianist Dina Ivanova, whom she met in 2017 at the Liszt Competition in Utrecht where Dina won the Third Prize and received the Audience Award. Instigated by a televised performance of Lili Boulanger's *Nocturne* on 8th of March 2020 during a broadcast of 'Podium Witteman' on Dutch television, the idea for '*The Boulanger Legacy*' was born.



Listen to the album here:

<https://trptk.com/the-boulanger-legacy/>

Watch Merel Vercammen and Dina Ivanova perform Piazzolla's Grand Tango:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q3q8RCGzuiM>

For physical review copies, images and interview requests please get in touch with:

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Track listing

Lili Boulanger

1. *Nocturne*
2. *Cortège*

Grazyna Bacewicz

3. Sonata No. 3 for violin and piano: I. Allegro moderato
4. Sonata No. 3 for violin and piano: II. Adagio
5. Sonata No. 3 for violin and piano: III. Scherzo. Vivo
6. Sonata No. 3 for violin and piano: IV. Finale. Andante

Lili Boulanger

7. *D'un matin de printemps*

Leonard Bernstein

8. Sonata for violin and piano: Moderato assai
9. Sonata for violin and piano: Variation 1 – Adagio
10. Sonata for violin and piano: Variation 2 – Prestissimo
11. Sonata for violin and piano: Variation 3 - L'istesso tempo
12. Sonata for violin and piano: Variation 4 - Andante teneramente
13. Sonata for violin and piano: Variation 5 - Allegro agitato
14. Sonata for violin and piano: Variation 6 - Finale. Sostenuto

Astor Piazzolla

15. *Le Grand Tango*

Nadia Boulanger

16. Trois pièces: I. Modéré

Merel Vercammen

Dutch violinist Merel Vercammen graduated cum lauda from the Royal College of Music in London. She received prizes at the London Grand Prize Virtuoso Competition, the National Competition of the Foundation for Young Musical Talent of the Netherlands and the Princess Christina Concours. Merel has performed throughout the world and played in renowned concert halls such as the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg and Wigmore Hall in London.

Merel had her first violin lessons when she was five years old and began studying at the HKU Utrecht Conservatory under Eeva Koskinen at the age of fifteen. At the Royal College of Music in London, she earned a Bachelor of Music as well as a Master of Performance, under Jan Repko. She then proceeded to study under Ilya Grubert at the Santa Cecilia Music Foundation in Portogruaro, Italy. Furthermore, she has followed masterclasses by Josef Rissin, Lewis Kaplan, Daniel Hope, Alina Ibragimova and Zakhar Bron. Her debut album Symbiosis with pianist Dina Ivanova came out on Gutman Records in March 2019 and has been very well received in the international press.

As a soloist, Merel has performed violin concertos by Beethoven, Brahms and Otto Ketting. In 2017, she premiered a violin concerto by composer Mathilde Wantenaar, written especially for her. In addition, she has developed an interactive performance about music and the brain and engages in improvisation. In September 2019, Merel released her second album, The Zoo, which contains free improvisations with eight duo partners, and in 2020 she released a digital EP, Silent City, with cellist Maya Fridman.

www.merelvercammen.com/en/

Twitter: [@MerelMC](https://twitter.com/MerelMC)

Facebook: [@MerelVercammenViolinist](https://www.facebook.com/MerelVercammenViolinist)

Dina Ivanova

Russian pianist Dina Ivanova has won prizes in various competitions, including the second prize at the Liszt Competition in Weimar, the second prize at the Ricardo Viñes Competition in Spain, an Honorary Mention Award at the Paderewski Competition in Poland, and the Artist Recognition Award at the International Keyboard Festival in New York. In 2017, Dina won the audience award and the third prize from the jury during the Liszt Competition in Utrecht.

Dina started taking piano lessons from her mother at the age of four. She studied at the Central Music School in Moscow and the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow under Alexander Mndoyants. As of September 2018, she is studying under Grigory Gruzman at the University of Music Franz Liszt in Weimar. Dina has followed masterclasses by Dmitri Bashkirov, Leslie Howard, Jerome Rose, Leon Fleisher, Awadagin Pratt and Pavel Gililov.

As a soloist, she has performed with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, the Thüringer Philharmonie, and the Israel Symphony Orchestra, among others. As part of the Career Development Programme offered by Utrecht's Liszt Piano Competition, Dina engaged in an extensive concert tour as a soloist, including concerts with the Korean Symphony Orchestra in Seoul and the KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic Orchestra in Durban, South Africa; as well as recitals in South America, the United States, Russia, South Africa and Europe. Dina has also recorded work by composer Sergei Lyapunov for the multiyear CD project Anthology of Russian Music.

www.dinaivanova.com